

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows.

1. (Withdrawn) A method comprising:

enabling, via a web site hosted by a third-party payment service, a sender party to arrange for shipment of a package to a recipient party via a shipping vendor;

interacting with an online facility hosted by the shipping vendor to facilitate the shipment; and

facilitating, via the third-party payment service, payment from the sender party to the shipping vendor for the shipment.

2. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the arranging for the shipment of the package includes:

serving a first set of web pages including one or more web pages to a client operated by the sender party via which the sender party may enter shipping information;

passing the shipping information entered by the sender party to an on-line interface provided by the shipping vendor;

receiving shipment data generated by the shipping vendor in response to the passing of the shipping information; and

providing the shipment data to the sender party via a second set of web pages including one or more web pages.

3. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 2, wherein data is passed between the third-party payment service and the shipping vendor in the form of XML (extensible markup language) documents, and the on-line interface comprises an XML application program interface (API).

4. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 2, wherein the shipping information includes send to: address information that may be entered by the sender party via a corresponding web page.

5. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 2, wherein the shipping information includes send from:

address information that may be entered by the sender party via a corresponding web page.

6. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 2, wherein the shipping information includes send to: address information that pertains to an address registered with one of the shipping vendor or third-party payment service that is automatically retrieved from a database.

7. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the payment of the shipment is facilitated by:

providing the payment from the third-party service to the shipping vendor; and
deducting a shipping cost of the shipment from a third-party payment service account held by the sender party.

8. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 7, wherein the payment from the third-party service to the shipping vendor is facilitated via a debit/credit card authorization/settlement network.

9. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 8, wherein the payment from the third-party service to the shipping vendor employs a virtual debit card.

10. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, further comprising providing a computer interface via the third-party service that functions as a proxy to enable a user to obtain a shipping account with the shipping vendor.

11. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, further comprising serving data to a client computer operated by the sender party to enable the sender party to print out a shipping label pertaining to the shipment.

12. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein an arrangement of the shipment and payment to the shipping vendor appears to the shipping vendor as if the sender party is directly accessing on-line facilities hosted by the shipping vendor.

13. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, further comprising enabling the sender party to view tracking information related to shipment of the package via the third-party payment service.

14. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 11, wherein the third-party payment service enables the sender party to view tracking information by:

automatically navigating, via a proxy operation, to a web site hosted by the shipping vendor and entering a tracking number; and

directing a web server hosting the web site to send a tracking summary page generated in response to entry of the tracking number to a client computer operated by the sender party.

15. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

tabulating shipment purchases for each user over a predetermined period; and

preventing a user from arranging further shipments if the tabulated purchases over the predetermined period exceed a predetermined purchase limit.

16. (Previously Presented) A system comprising:
a web server; and
an integrated shipping server, linked in communication with the web server,
the web server and integrated shipping server, acting as an intermediary server between a sender and a shipping vendor, comprising software instructions that when executed enable the sender to arrange for shipment of a package to a recipient via the shipping vendor by performing operations, by the integrated shipping server, including:

generating and serving web pages via which shipping information pertaining to the shipment may be automatically entered and/or manually entered by the sender; and
interacting with an on-line interface hosted by the shipping vendor to arrange for shipment of the package via the shipping vendor through use of the shipping information;
receiving shipping data pertaining to the shipment from the shipping vendor, said shipping data including data corresponding to a shipping label; and
generating and serving a web page via which the shipping label may be printed.

17. (Original) The system of claim 16, further comprising a payment server linked in communication with the integrated shipping server and comprising further software instructions that when executed perform the operation of facilitating payment for the shipment from the seller to the shipping vendor.

18. (Original) The system of claim 17, wherein the system is configured to be operable by a third-party payment service for which the seller has an account, and facilitating payment of the shipment comprises:

providing payment from the third-party service to the shipping vendor; and
deducting a shipping cost of the shipment from the seller's third-party payment service account.

19. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein payment from the third-party service to the shipping vendor is facilitated via interaction between the payment server and a debit/credit card authorization/settlement network.

20. (Original) The system of claim 19, wherein execution of the software instructions further performs the operations of:

generating a virtual debit card; and

employing the virtual debit card to pay the shipping vendor.

21. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 16, wherein execution of the software instructions further perform the operation of performing a proxy operation to enable the seller to obtain a shipping account with the shipping vendor via interaction with web pages served by the web server.

22. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 16, wherein execution of the software instructions further perform the operations of:

storing a tracking number corresponding to the shipment that is received from the shipping vendor;

automatically navigating, via a proxy operation, to a web site hosted by the shipping vendor and entering the tracking number; and

directing a web server hosting the web site to send a tracking summary page generated in response to entry of the tracking number to a client computer operated by the seller.